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The Sumerian View of Beginnings.—By MORRIS JASTROW, JR.,
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As the result of an independent study of an important and unusually interesting Sumerian text recently published by Dr. Stephen Langdon, of Oxford,¹ I have reached an interpretation differing entirely from that proposed by the industrious editor. As indicated by the title of his publication, Dr. Langdon believes that the text contains a Sumerian account of Paradise, of the Flood, and of the Fall of Man. According to my interpretation, the text is an incantation, incidental to which Sumerian myths are introduced which set forth the Sumerian view of the beginnings of things, but there is no description of Paradise in this text nor any reference to a Flood, nor does it touch in any way on such a problem as the Fall of Man. Since some time may elapse before I shall have the opportunity of publishing my paper on the subject in full, I wish to set forth the results at once in a brief summary, both because of the importance of the text itself and of the widespread interest that it has aroused, and also in the hope that my suggestions may lead other scholars to take up the text without delay and help in the solution of the many difficulties which it presents. Let me add, that I have no personal controversy with the first interpreter of the text, the discovery and publication of which entitle him to the gratitude of his colleagues. I have merely reached different conclusions as a result of my study. My readings of the text, I should add, involving quite a number of important corrections of Dr. Langdon's publication, are based on a collation of the tablet made with the coöperation of my student, Dr. Edward Chiera, of the University of Pennsylvania. In the complete paper all these new readings will be fully indicated.

¹ *The Sumerian Epic of Paradise, the Flood and the Fall of Man* (University of Pennsylvania Museum, Publications of the Babylonian Section, Vol. X, No. 1, Philadelphia, 1915). See also two preliminary articles on the tablet by Dr. Langdon: (1) "Preliminary Account of a Sumerian Version of the Flood and the Fall of Man" (*Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archaeology*, 1914, pages 188-198. (2) "An Account of the Pre-Semitic Version of the Fall of Man," *ib.* pp. 253-263.

1. The text, as Langdon himself recognized in a general way, stands in close relation to the fragment published by Dr. Poebel about two years ago in his volume of *Historical and Grammatical Texts* (Publications of the Babylonian Section of the Museum of Archaeology of the University of Pennsylvania, Vol. V, Philadelphia, 1914, plate 1). According to Poebel's interpretation this tablet contains an account of Creation and then passes on to a description of the Flood. A comparison of Poebel's fragment with Langdon's text shows that both consist of three columns on the obverse and on the reverse, and, what is particularly striking, the width of the two tablets is exactly the same. Both texts are in Sumerian and the character of the writing is identical. Besides some analogous expressions common to both tablets, the name of the place which Dr. Langdon reads as Dilmun occurs in Dr. Poebel's text (column 6, line 12) written with what may be a phonetic complement *na*, precisely as at the close of Langdon's text (column 6, line 50). The two texts evidently belong to a series, and if this be admitted, the fact that in Poebel's text a full account of the flood is given, with Ziugiddu as the hero who escapes, makes it unlikely that Langdon's text should also contain, as he believes, an account of the Deluge. Of the two texts, Langdon's comes first, and I believe Poebel's represents a direct successor. If, therefore, Langdon's tablet is the first of a series, Poebel's would be the second. Let us hope that a further search among the Nippur collection of the University of Pennsylvania fragments will result in completing Poebel's tablet.

2. Langdon's text, according to my interpretation, begins with a description of a time when the earth existed, with mountains and even cities, to be eventually inhabited, but before there was any animal or human life in the world. The gods are in existence in a particular place, described as "holy" and designated as a "mountain," with "country" and "city" used apparently as synonyms. The god Enki (identified with Ea, the great god of the waters) and his consort are represented as dwelling in the place "alone."

3. The name of the mountain in which the god and goddess dwell is read by Langdon "Dilmun," but he himself admits (page 8, note 1) that the sign used is not the one ordinarily read as Dilmun. Poebel is more cautious, and while suggesting the possibility of Dilmun, does not accept it as a certainty

(page 61 of his translation and discussion of 'Historical and Grammatical Texts'). I doubt very much whether Dilmun is intended, the only point in favor of this interpretation being the use of the syllable *na* after the compound ideograph in Poebel's text and in *one* instance in Langdon's text. (See above under 1.) This, however, in itself cannot be regarded as conclusive. Langdon's view (following Jensen) that Dilmun is not, as is supposed by the majority of Assyriologists, an island in the Persian Gulf, but to be sought for on the eastern shore, will be fully discussed in my paper.

4. The text being a poem, we must be prepared for poetic language. What Langdon takes for a description of Paradise, where animals lived in peaceful tranquility, where there were no diseases and where people did not grow old (column 1, lines 13-25), I take as a poetical description of the time when no animals and no human beings existed. When it is said that "the raven did not croak, and the kite did not shriek," that "the lion did not kill and the wolf did not plunder," it is simply a poetic way of saying that neither birds of prey nor animals of prey existed in the place where a god and goddess dwelt, as the text specifically says "alone," (lines 7 and 10). The same applies to the domestic animals enumerated in the following lines, and similarly when the text tells us that "one did not say 'eye disease,'" nor "headache," the conclusion to be drawn is that no demons of disease existed, because there were no people to catch the disease; or to put it in the Sumerian way, there were no people into whose bodies demons could enter. People "did not say 'Father' and 'Mother'" (not necessarily "old man" and "old woman," as Langdon renders the Sumerian terms), because there were neither parents to address nor children to address them—a poetical way, again, of saying that there were no people in the world. This is the reverse of what we find in Sumerian lamentation hymns where, in order to contrast the present desolation with former joys, it is said that in former times the wife said "My husband," the maiden said "My brother," the mother said "My child," the young girl said "My father," etc. (see Langdon, *Sumerian and Babylonian Psalms*, p. 292), to indicate that there were husbands, brothers, children and fathers in those days.

5. The reason for the absence of animals and human life is indicated in column 1, line 26, where it is specifically said

that "in the holy place no water flowed," and that "no water was poured out in the city." In substantiation of this we find (lines 31 to end of column 1) Ninella, who appears to be both daughter and consort of Enki, complaining to her father that he has founded a city, but that the city (line 35) "has no canal." She appeals to him (column 2, lines 1-6) to give the city sweet or drinking water in abundance, and in accord with this we find (column 2, lines 12-19) Enki changing the gathering of "bitter waters" into "sweet waters."

6. There follows what is perhaps the most interesting feature of the tablet (column 2, lines 21-32), the scene, described with primitive frankness, of the copulation of the god Enki and his consort Nintu or Nintud (whose name means 'goddess of birth'), as a result of which (line 33) the fields are "inundated." This point of view, according to which fertility arises as a result of the union, or the marriage, between a god and a goddess, is familiar to us in primitive myths, and it is sufficient in this summary to refer for many such examples to J. G. Frazer, *The Magic Art*, vol. II, chapter XI ("The Influence of the Sexes on Vegetation") and chapter XII § 2 ("The Marriage of the Gods").

7. Dr. Langdon, having failed to understand the passage just referred to, takes the description following, in lines 34 to the end of column 2, as an account of the Deluge. All, however, that is actually indicated in these lines is that the fields were inundated, or, as the text says, "received the waters of Enki," for one day in each of nine months. This ninth month is described (line 42) by two signs indicating "productiveness" and "water." It looks to me as though there were suggested here in the myth an analogy between the duration of the rainy season and the nine months of pregnancy. Line 43 of this column, reading, "Like fat, like fat, like rich (or 'good') cream" (not "tallow," as Dr. Langdon proposes), has reference to the abundant vegetation that follows upon the rainy season²; and to place the matter beyond all doubt, it is expressly said that it is Nintu ("the goddess of birth") who has "brought forth."

² Dr. Langdon (p. 6) interprets this single line to mean that all mankind, after the deluge of nine months, "dissolved in the waters like tallow and fat." Apart from the improbability of such an explanation of the metaphor, the comparison is somewhat unfortunate; the one thing that fat and tallow do *not* do is to dissolve in water.

8. In column 3 the same description of the "fields receiving the waters of Enki," with the inundation extending over a period of nine months (only one day in each month being specifically named), occurs twice, and it is evident that there is also associated with it a symbolism connecting this inundation with the resultant fertility. The goddess Ninshar³ calls upon Enki to show favor to her, whereupon Usmû,⁴ the messenger to Enki, is directed to perform apparently some purification rite both for the goddess and for the "son of man," here used in a generic sense for mankind. It is in connection with this somewhat obscure "purification ceremony" that Enki, addressed by his messenger as "my king," makes for a boat which is described as sinking two-thirds of its bulk as it floats on the waters, after which we have the passage of Enki, inundating the fields. The boat, I take it, is the one in which the god, as the genius presiding over the waters, sails, and to which there are numerous references in Cuneiform texts, e. g., in the Syllabary K. 4378 (Delitzsch, *Assyrische Lesestücke*, 3d ed., p. 88, col. V, 31).

9. At the close of column 3, the goddess Nintu and a god whose name may be read either Tag-Tug or Shum-tug or Tag-tush, or Tak-Ku⁵ are introduced, but in a passage too obscure to be briefly treated in this summary. Suffice it to say, however, that there is no reason to assume that Takku is anything but a god. His name is written with the usual determinative for deity, and in order to convert him into a human being Langdon translates the determinative and thus obtains "the divine Tag-Tug." In this way any god can be transformed into a human being.⁶

³ So the reading is, clearly, throughout col. III (except line 40) in lines 1, 5, 8, and not Nintu (or Nintud), as Langdon reads. Ninshar may, however, be merely a variant name for Nintu, just as Nin-Kur (col. III, lines 21, 25, 28), "Lady of the Mountain," appears to be.

⁴ Or Isimu—written Kur-Igi-gunu-Nun-Me. The signs in lines 3, 6, 23, 26, as well as col. V, lines 16 and 19, clearly give the name of the god Usmû or Isimu (Cuneiform Texts 24, Pl. 16, 45, where Kur Igi-gunu-Nun-Me = Usmû is specifically named as the "Messenger of Enki"). See also Meissner, *Seltene Assy. Ideogramme*, No. 688 and the passages quoted by Zimmern, *Babylonische Busspalmen*, p. 49 seq.

⁵ This, I think, is the correct reading.

⁶ All that Langdon says on this point (p. 55, Note 1) is beside the mark; and the same applies to his note 2 on p. 51. In col. V, as in col.

10. Column 4, though badly mutilated at the beginning, clearly contains further references to the irrigation and inundation of the fields, as a result of which the earth is in bloom. The significance of the scene described in the closing portion of this column, in which the god Enki is represented as coming to the god Takku (or however his name is to be read) and knocking at the door of the latter's temple, and, upon its being opened, announcing himself as a gardener offering his fruits for sale(?) (line 42), I confess is not clear to me, but there is evidently here again some symbolism suggesting the rich return of fruits that comes as a result of the filling of the canals and water courses. I am inclined to believe that the harvest rejoicing is more or less symbolically described, but I am not at all sure of this.

11. Column 5 gives a most interesting account of the way in which Usmû, the messenger of Enki, instructs some one—presumably the first man or mankind—in the use of plants and trees. Usmû assigns names to the various plants, which, according to the Sumerian as well as the Babylonian idea, is equivalent to fixing their fate, or, as we should say, determining their character. Eight plants and trees are named, divided into two groups: such as grow above the ground, the fruits of which are, therefore, "cut," and such as grow below the ground, which are "plucked out." The scene suggests the famous passage in Berosus,⁷ embodying the ancient Babylonian tradition of the mythical being Oannes (the water god Enki or Ea) coming out of the water and giving instruction to mankind in all kinds of things, *including agriculture*.⁸ The last of the plants named is Am-Ha-Ru, which, on the basis of Cuneiform Texts 14, Pl. 18, Obv. 26,⁹ Langdon correctly identifies as "cassia"; but all that he says about this being "the forbidden fruit" is

III, "my king" always refers to Enki. This Tag-tug (assuming this to be the reading) has no connection whatsoever with Langdon's supposed deluge, for he is not mentioned at all till the close of col. III. To connect him with the "deluge," Langdon has to assume that he is referred to as "my king" (col. 3, 9 and 29).

⁷ Cory, *Ancient Fragments*, p. 21 seq.

⁸ The Greek text says, "sowing and harvesting of fruits."

⁹ Am-Ha-Ra = *ka-su-u*. See also *Cuneiform Texts* 14; Pl. 33 (K. 9182, 5) and Pl. 27, (S. 1846, 7) and Kùchler, *Babylonisch-Assyrische Medizin*, KK 71, etc. III, 50 (p. 32) where Am-Ha-Ra occurs as an ingredient in a concoction prescribed for the consequence of a "jag."

erroneous. There is no question of any forbidden fruit in the passage (column 5, lines 20-36). In regard to *all* eight plants it is said that they may be eaten, being either "cut off" or "plucked out." As long as Langdon had merely the lower fragment of the reverse before him (when he wrote his preliminary article in the *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archaeology*, June 1914), containing the reference to the single plant, cassia, there was some justification for his guess that the tablet contained an account of the eating of some forbidden fruit, but he should at once have abandoned this idea upon seeing that the other part of column 5 spoke of seven other plants in exactly the same way as of the cassia.¹⁰ Quite apart from everything else, it is unlikely that of all plants the cassia should have been set down in any myth as a forbidden fruit. For the Oriental cassia, which has made its way in the form of senna leaves to all parts of the world, is one of the oldest as well as one of the most useful of ancient drugs; and fortunately is one of the few mentioned in the Babylonian-Assyrian medical texts that can be identified with certainty.¹¹ No people would even make an indispensable drug a forbidden plant.

The cassia is mentioned in this list of eight plants just because of its great importance and usefulness; and this, no doubt, holds good also of the other seven enumerated, which, so far as they are intelligible, will be discussed in my paper.

11. At the close of column 5, the doom of man, that he must die, appears to be announced, but not as a result of any act of disobedience. Both in the story of Adapa and in the Gilgamesh account, we find the Sumerian and Babylonian view clearly set forth, that when the gods created man "they decreed death for him, and kept life in their own hands."¹² Some of

¹⁰ Even the verb in line 34, in connection with Am-Ha-Ru or cassia, is the same as in lines 20, 22 (and to be supplied, lines 24, 26, 28, 32), namely, *mu-na-ab-bi*, "spoke" or "commanded." Langdon's reading of the last syllable "teg," in line 34, is an error. The text shows plainly "bi."

¹¹ See Jastrow, "Medicine of the Babylonians and Assyrians" (*Proceedings of the Royal Society of Medicine, Section of the History of Medicine*, March, 1914), p. 133. Our term "cassia" is the Babylonian term *kasû*, coming down to us through the Greek form. The *kasû* occurs constantly in these Babylonian-Assyrian medical texts.

¹² Dhorme, *Choix de Textes Religieux Assyro-Babyloniens*, p. 300 (col. III, 3-5); Ungnad-Gressman, *Das Gilgamesch-Epos*, p. 72. The Adapa

the gods are occasionally represented as regretting this decision, and in Langdon's text the goddess Ninharsag and the group of Anunnaki are so pictured, but there is not the slightest suggestion of death having come to man through his own fault. That idea is foreign to the Sumerian-Babylonian point of view.

12. The first part of column 6, containing references to the gods Enlil, Nannar (the Moon-god—so to be read in line 7), Ninib (so to be read perhaps in line 8), and Ninharsag, is too broken to be intelligible.

Beginning with line 23 and extending to line 41, we have a series of gods (or divine beings) enumerated, who are created in order to furnish relief from the various diseases to which flocks and men are heir. This part of the tablet is perhaps also to be brought into connection with the tradition, reported by Berosus,¹³ of Oannes or Enki giving instruction to man how to protect himself against disease and suffering.

The tablet closes with an incantation invoking the names of the various deities enumerated in connection with diseases. This incantation is the goal of the text to which the several myths of the beginnings of things lead up. Further examples of such incantations in which myths are introduced to strengthen and justify the incantation itself will be given in the fuller paper on Langdon's text. An interesting point, which will also be more fully discussed in the complete paper, is the play of words in column 6 between the name of the part of the body diseased and the name of the deity created for the purpose of relieving the disease in question. Thus, for the disease of the mouth (Ka) the goddess Nin-Ka-Si is created. For distress of the flocks (U-tul) the goddess Nin-Tul-la, etc.

13. It will be seen that the tablet deals in the first part with a description of the time before the world was populated, and presents in the form of a number of myths a picture of vegetation and fertility arising, first, from the copulation of the god Enki and his consort, who is represented at the same time as his daughter; and, second, from the inundation of the fields, viewed apparently under the aspect of a purification ceremony,

myth says that man was given wisdom (i. e., knowledge) but not "eternal life" (Fragment I, 4). Dhorme l. c. p. 148; Ungnad-Gressman, *Altorientalische Texte und Bilder*, I, p. 35.

¹³ Berosus says that Oannes transmitted to men "writing, science and the arts of all kinds," which would, therefore, include also the healing art.

based upon the current views of the sanctity attaching to water as a purifying element.

The second part of the tablet appears to be taken up largely with instructions given to man through various deities. Leaving the details for discussion in my full paper on the subject, let me here call attention to two points of a more general character.

14. The picture of the god forcing the goddess, who declares that "no man has ever entered into her," throws an interesting light on the custom vouched for as late as the days of Herodotus, of the symbolical union between the god and goddess carried out as part of the religious rites in the city of Babylon. Herodotus, as will be recalled (Book I, § 181), describes the sacred chamber on the top of the stage tower at Babylon, which contained as its sole furniture a couch on which the woman lay who is to be visited by the god. The god is, of course, represented by the priest, and there is little doubt that Herodotus is describing a rite based upon the scene so naïvely and frankly described in Langdon's tablet.

15. The view taken in Langdon's text of the beginning of things is precisely the one that we find in a Sumerian version of Creation (*Cuneiform Texts*, 13, plates 35-38) which has been known to scholars for a long time, and which presents a striking contrast to the main Babylonian version in which the principal scene is the conflict between Marduk and Tiamat. In this Babylonian version the beginning of time is pictured as chaotic, with a monster, symbolical of the raging waters, in sole control. Until the lawlessness symbolized by these monsters can be overcome through some god, who, under one name or another, marks the conquest of the winter rains through the sun of the spring, earth, vegetation and mankind cannot make their appearance. Law and order must be established before the world can become habitable. This appears to have been the view developed under later Akkadian or Semitic influences, whereas the earlier Sumerian view, as set forth in the text above referred to, does not conceive of a time when the world did not exist, but merely before it was populated by men and animals and before vegetation appeared. There is no conflict in this version. Therefore, in this Sumerian text the first step in Creation was the founding of cities, and, naturally, the oldest cities known to the Sumerians are enumerated, beginning with Eridu. It is a fair inference

that in the earliest form of this Sumerian myth only one city, the oldest of all, was mentioned.¹⁴ After the "city" has been established, mankind, animals and vegetation appear.

Now, this is exactly the point of view set forth in Langdon's text. The world is in existence, a "mountain," a "country," and even a "city" are there, but the world is empty. The god Enki and his consort "alone" inhabit it, though no doubt it is assumed that other gods produced through Enki, either by himself or with the help of his consort, are also in existence; but no animals, no men, and no vegetation. The difference, then, between the early Sumerian and the later Babylonian view may be summed up in the statement that in the Sumerian view the chief factor in the Creation myth is the bringing about of vegetation and fertility, whereas in the Babylonian or Akkadian tale the main stress is laid upon the substitution of law and order for primitive chaos and lawlessness. It is interesting to note that in the two versions of Creation in the Book of Genesis we have a parallel to the Babylonian and Sumerian points of view respectively. The P document, or the Priestly Code (Gen. 1, 1 to 2, 4^a), represents water as the primeval element and its main idea is the establishment of order in the world, with a sequence of creation brought about by the word of Elohim. In the J, or Jahwistic, version (Gen. 2, 4^b *seq.*), the earth is represented as in existence, but without any vegetation and without any one to till the soil. It has long been recognized that of the two versions the J version represents the more primitive point of view as is indicated also in the manner of the creation of man; while P belongs to a much more advanced period of thought, and, moreover, has been adapted to a purified monotheistic conception of divine government. Similarly, the Babylonian or Akkadian point of view evidently represents an advance upon the Sumerian, and it is interesting as well as important to find in Cuneiform documents a parallel to the two views embodied in the Book of Genesis. The bearings of this parallel upon the possible relationship between Babylonian and Biblical traditions will be discussed more fully in a special forthcoming paper.

¹⁴ The text itself shows evidence of having been worked over in order to adapt it to later conditions, as I shall endeavor to prove in a separate paper on "Sumerian and Akkadian Views of Beginnings." See, meanwhile, King's translation in his *Seven Tablets of Creation*, Vol. I, pp. 130-139.

Postscript. After this article had been typewritten and was about to be sent off, the *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archaeology* for January, 1916, appeared, with some corrections by Dr. Langdon to his text (pp. 40-43), embodied also in an article in the *Expository Times* for January, 1916, pp. 165-168. In this latter article Dr. Langdon also republishes his translation with some changes, and maintains his three main theses, that his text contains an account (a) of the Sumerian Paradise, (b) of the Deluge, and (c) of the Fall of Man. In reply to the article of Professor Sayce (*Expository Times*, November, 1915, who rejected Langdon's second thesis, Dr. Langdon sets up the claim that, in view of the relationship between his tablet and Dr. Poebel's text (see above, under 1), the occurrence of an account of the Deluge in *Poebel's* text proves the correctness of interpreting columns 2 and 3 in *Langdon's* text as referring to a deluge. Just the contrary is the case. If the two tablets belong, as I believe—and as Dr. Langdon now appears to believe,—to the same series, then the fact that we have an account of a Deluge in Poebel's text, with Ziugiddu as the hero, certainly makes it highly improbable, if not impossible, that we should also have an account of a Deluge in Langdon's text. The assumption that Tag-Tug (if this be the reading) "is the same person under another name," namely, the same as Ziugiddu, is purely arbitrary. Equally arbitrary is the insertion by Langdon of the words "at that time" at the beginning of line 34 of column 5 (see above, under 11, and particularly the note on this line). The line in question forms, as I have indicated, a complete parallel to lines 20, 22, 24, 26, 28, 30, 32, except that in each one of these lines a different plant is named. Langdon's first restoration, therefore, at the beginning of this line, of the words "my king," was obvious and correct, since each one of these lines begins with this word. At the time that Dr. Langdon made the correct restoration he assumed that "my king" referred to his hypothetical Tag-Tug. Having now found out (p. 167 of E. T. for Jan., 1916) that he was mistaken in this, and that "my king" refers throughout the text to the god Enki, as I have also shown above in the note to § 9, it would, of course, not fit in with his interpretation to supply "my king" at the beginning of line 34, and he therefore conjectures the words "at that time," suggesting further, in a footnote, that possibly the name Tag-Tug is to be restored here. I have shown above

that the verb at the end of line 34 is precisely the same as at the close of lines 20, 22, 24, 26, 28, 30, 32, namely, "has commanded." Langdon, not recognizing that his reading of the sign at the close of line 34 is incorrect, retains his erroneous translation "approached." If we substitute for this the correct reading "has commanded," it is of course obvious that at the beginning of the line we *must* read "my king." Tag-Tug not being even mentioned in column 5 (so far as preserved), it is, as will be admitted, a most arbitrary procedure to introduce him by a conjectural restoration at the beginning of a line for the purpose of maintaining a theory. Such a method cannot commend itself to scholars.

I am glad to see that Dr. Langdon has now recognized the occurrence of the name of the god Isimu or Usmû, in column 3, line 3, and that he has thus got rid of the erroneous translation "divine anointed ones" for this and the five other parallel lines. Recognizing now that in line 9 of column 3 "my king" refers to the god Enki, and not to the hypothetical Tag-Tug, who is never mentioned until the end of this column, it follows that the boat (line 10 and line 30),—the *only* clear reference to any ship in the whole tablet,—*must* be the boat of the god. (See above, under 8.) To save his theory, however, that Tag-Tug takes refuge on the boat, Langdon now translates the crucial line (line 10 = line 30) "alone upon the boat *awaited him*;" that is, the god Enki had an appointment to meet or to wait for Tag-Tug on the boat. Is it conceivable that any writer would refer by a suffix to a verb to a personage who has not been mentioned before, and who in fact is never mentioned till 30 lines later? Here again we have an illustration of Dr. Langdon's curious method of changing a translation in order to save a theory. His former translation, "his foot alone upon the boat set," making this refer to Tag-Tug, was much nearer the mark. The verb at the end of the line, "Gub," means "to place," "to stand," etc., and, together with the word "foot" at the beginning, is evidently intended to indicate that some one is "making for the boat," or ready to step on board the boat; and, of course, the subject of the verb is the "king" or the god Enki mentioned in the preceding line.

Lastly, let me say that Langdon's revised translation of line 32, column 2, "Oh, Ninḫarsag, I will destroy the fields with a

deluge," is neither an improvement nor is it justified by the text. All that can safely be concluded from this line that is after Enki had uttered "his word" (as indicated in line 30) the inundation of the fields follows, and this is expressed by saying that "the fields of Ninĥarsag were inundated," or possibly, "the field was inundated by Ninĥarsag." The word "deluge" is Dr. Langdon's addition. The line contains merely the following words: (1) Ninĥarsag, with genitive ending, (2) field, and (3) a verb Ri or Rig, the common meaning of which is *raĥāṣu* "inundate."

Otherwise, there are few changes which Dr. Langdon introduces, and since he retains his erroneous translation of lines 24-26, of column 2, he naturally misses the purpose of what I think is the chief and certainly the most interesting episode in the tablet, the irrigation of the fields and the resultant fertility, coming as a consequence of the union of the god with the goddess.

Perhaps it is just as well that by way of further explanation I should justify my interpretation of these three important lines. At the beginning of all three lines¹⁵ is the sign Uš, the common value of which is the 'male member.' Added to Uš is the suffix of the third person, i. e., therefore, "his member." The verb at the end of line 24 is "expose," at the end of line 25 "sink" or "insert," at the end of line 26 "did not (or "would not") draw out." There can therefore be no doubt that the sexual act is here described. Besides in line 25 we have the sign also for the female organ into which the god Enki "inserts his Uš," and in line 27 the goddess Nintu cries, "No man has come to me," the verb used, it is interesting to note, being precisely the same as in Hebrew usage, to denote the sexual act. The full commentary to these three lines, as to the entire passage, will be found in the forthcoming paper.¹⁶

¹⁵ Langdon misread the first sign in l. 25; it is clearly *Uš* on the original, precisely as at the beginning of lines 24 and 26.

¹⁶ Let me also add, for the immediate convenience of those desiring to make an independent study of the important text, my chief corrections to Langdon's readings, based on a collation of the tablet in the University Museum, kindly placed at my disposal by the Director, Dr. G. B. Gordon:

Col. 1, 15-16, the 7th sign is in both cases *uḫ*.

Col. 2, 24. The 4th and 5th signs are to be taken as one—*Dirig* (Brünnow No. 3739), though *Kalagga* (Brünnow No. 6194) is also possible.

Col. 2, 25. The first sign is *Uš*, as in lines 24 and 26.

Col. 3, 1. The name of the goddess here as well as in lines 5 and 8 is Nin-šar—not Nin-tu.

Col. 3, 2. The 3d sign appears to be *zuk* (Brünnnow No. 10300). So also in lines 43, 44 and Col. 5, 15.

Col. 3, 4, 5, 7, 8—Sign before last is *ub*. Read therefore in all these instances, as well as lines 24 and 25, *nu-mu-un-su-ub-bi*. The verb is *su-ub* in the sense of “purifying, cleansing.” See Delitzsch, *Sumerisches glossar*, p. 148.

Col. 3, 11. After the third sign read the notation for $\frac{2}{3}$, followed by *Rim* (Brünnnow No. 4815) and the phonetic complement *ma*. So also in line 31.

Col. 3, 12. Last sign is *ub*; so also l. 32.

Col. 4, lines 18, 19, 20, 35, 36, 46 and 47, first sign is probably *giš*, not *e*.

Col. 4, 42. First sign is *šam* (Brünnnow No. 4681) “price.”

Col. 4, 45. Instead of *aš* and *gar*, read together as one sign *šur*; so also col. 6, 42.

Col. 4, 48. Langdon has omitted *si* after *ab*.

Col. 5, 34. Last sign is *bi* (not *teg*) just as in lines 20 and 22, etc.

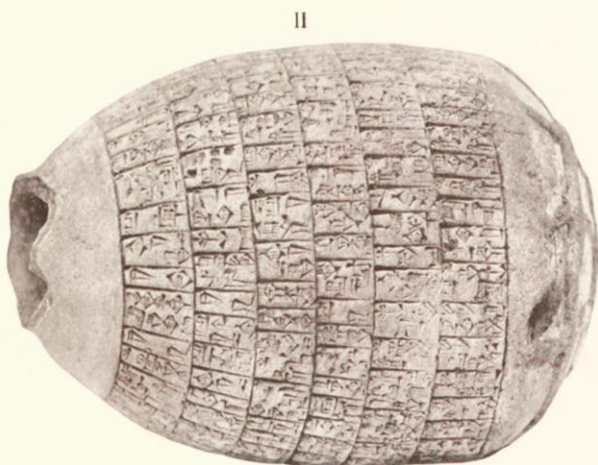
Col. 5, 40. First sign is quite clearly *Lul* (Brünnnow No. 7265); so also 4th sign of line 42, and first sign of l. 45.

Col. 5, 44. Third sign is *a*, not the notation for two; 6th sign is *bi*; 8th sign is probably *ni*.

Col. 6, 30. Eighth sign is *gig* (not *zu*), just as in lines 24, 27, 32, etc., etc.

Col. 6, 46. Omitted in Langdon's copy, though included in his transliteration.

The full list of corrections and suggested new readings will be given in the complete paper.



NEW CONE OF ENTEMENA

I THE NET. II THE SIX NEW CASES IN COL. II.
III VARIANTS IN COLS. IV AND VI.